

12. FURTHER NOTE ON THE PAIR FORMATION OF THE COMMON MYNA, *ACRIDOTHERES TRISTIS*

The existence of life long pair bond among birds is still shrouded in mystery. Although a number of bird species have been said to pair for life there is little concrete evidence (Van Tyne & Berger 1959). However, Lack (1940) cited a number of example of bird species which were suspected to pair for life. In the present paper I would like to record the preliminary findings on the multi-year pair bond among the Common Myna as observed at Santiniketan, W. Bengal, India from 1969-1973. The presentation of this paper was felt necessary since it gave some new information on the duration of the pair bond in birds as envisaged in the Common Myna and since there was little reliable data on the subject.

In a previous paper (Sengupta 1968) I mentioned that pair formation among the Common Myna 'takes place in the early spring and dissolves after the young have been raised', i.e. for a period of 4-5 months. Incidentally, its breeding period ranged from April to June and parental bond with the young ended around the middle of August.

However, my conclusion on the pair bond was then based largely on observations and by ringing four nesting pairs at Sinthee and Berhampore, W. Bengal. In April 1970, ten nesting pairs were colour ringed (Pair No. 1-10). They were found in pairs even after the dissociation of the parental bond around the last week of August. They were not defending a territory after the young had left and explored food as and where available. Their bond continued through winter when they roosted as usual on the communal roosting site among the foliage of trees situated at the southern outskirts of the University campus. In April 1971 all the ringed pairs (1-10) established breeding territories and nested with the old partners and successfully raised young. Being stimulated by this result in June 1971 another 20 nesting pairs (P. No. 11-30) were ringed. Regular observations were made to spot the different ringed pairs and their behaviour noted. This showed the repetition of the last year's observation. During late April 1972 when territory was established by Pair No. 1-30 of 1970-71, it was noted that partner of Pair No. 2 was nesting with an unringed bird. But it was not known whether the change of mate was necessitated by the desertion of the partner or by its death. However, in May 1972 another 24 nesting pairs (P. No. 31-54) were ringed. From 1972 onward regular observation was restricted to four pairs (P. No. 4, 7, 12, 18) which fed mostly around my residence to note the daily association of the individual pairs. May 1973 saw the nesting of the ringed birds with their old partners except Pair No. 16 and 20. These two pairs could not be located. Another 10 pairs (P. No. 55-64) were ringed in June 1973. In February

1974 I made a thorough survey to locate all the ringed Myna at different regions of Santiniketan in seven different days spending a total of 6 hours (Average) daily. This resulted in observation of the individual ringed pairs feeding, roosting and performing other function together during most of the time. During the nesting season of 1973 Pair No. 2, 8, 35 & 40 acquired old territories and others established new territories as usual. The return to the old territory was presumably a chance affair.

Careful observation on the un-ringed Myna population also clearly showed the continuance of the pair bond beyond the breeding season. As one could find the Common Myna feeding, moving, returning to the roost in two throughout the year.

It was also interesting to mention that Pair No. 8 continued occupying and defending its breeding territory through the winter of 1973 and was doing the same till the writing of this note. This pair fed mostly in and around its territory. But none of the other ringed Mynas occupied territory beyond the breeding season though they maintained the pair bond throughout the year.

Therefore it could be concluded from the present investigation that the pair bond in the Common Myna extends for several years (may be for life) and there is possibility of other birds of this family doing the same.

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13. OCCURRENCE OF BANK MYNA *ACRIDOTHERES GINGINIANUS* (LATHAM) IN VISAKHAPATNAM (A.P.)

A small group of Bank mynas were seen feeding among the *Tephrosia* undergrowth near Lawsons bay colony in Visakhapatnam on 20th February, 1974.

Again on 29th August, 1974, I saw them more or less in the same area and Mr. K. S. R. Krishna Raju confirmed their identity.